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October 23, 2002

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IN THE UNITED STATES

PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANTS:

Ted E. Dunning and Bradley D. Kindig

APPLICATION NO.:

09/846,823

FILING DATE:

April 30, 2001

Relationship Discovery Engine

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TITLE:

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EXAMINER:

Not yet known

GROUP 3600

GROUP ART UNIT:

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Dated: October 23, 2002

COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231

SUPPLEMENTAL PETITION TO MAKE SPECIAL

SIR:

In response to the Decision on Petition to Make Special, which was mailed on October 8, 2002, Applicants are hereby filing a Supplemental Petition to M ke Special to correct the deficiency of the Petition Fee. Enclosed herewith is a fee transmittal, in duplicate, which authorizes the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to charge the required fees for the Petition to Make Special to our deposit account 19-2555.

Applicants hereby petition to make the above-referenced application special as described in MPEP §708.02 VIII. No examination has yet be en taken by an Examiner in this case. The claims are directed to a single invention. If the Office determines that all the claims presented

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are not obviously directed to a single invention, Applicants will make an election without traverse as a prerequisite to the grant of special status.

A pre-examination search has been made with respect to the present invention by the professional searching company MetroPatent. The following classes and subclasses were searched: Class 709, subclass 231. Additional search of EAST was conducted by Applicants' representatives.

Pursuant to the provisions of 37 CFR 1.56 and 1.97-98, enclosed herewith is a modified form PTO-1449 listing references for consideration by the Examiner. A copy of each of those references not already of record and deemed most closely related to the subject matter encompassed by the claims was sent with the original Petition to Make Special. The inclusion of these references shall not be construed as a representation regarding the completeness of the list of references, or that inclusion of a reference in this list is an admission that it is prior art or is pertinent to this application, or as an admission that the information listed is, or may be considered to be, material to patentability, or that no other material information exists, and shall not be construed as an admission against interest in any manner.

Detailed Discussion of the References

Pursuant to the provisions of MPEP §708.02 VIII, the following is a detailed discussion of the references listed in the accompanied modified form PTO-1449, which discussion points out, with the particularity required by 37 CFR 1.111(b) and (c), now the claimed subject matter is patentable over the references.

Independent claim 1 recites:

 A computer-implemented method of discovering relationships between items, comprising:

accepting item selections from a plurality of users;

generating a log for each user, each log containing identifiers for the user's item selections;

accepting a query including at least one query item identifier;

scoring the user logs, responsive to a degree of occurrence of the at least one query item identifier in the user logs, to generate user log scores; and determining at least one result item, responsive to a degree of occurrence in at least a

Independent claim 34 recites:

34. A computer-implemented method of discovering a relationship between a first item and a second item, comprising:

determining a total number of item groups N;

subset of the scored user logs.

determining a number of item groups N₁ in a subset of item groups, the subset of item groups being defined as including those item groups that contain a second item;

determining a number of item groups N2 not in the 51-bset of item groups;

determining a number of item groups k11 in the subset that contain the first item;

determining a number of item groups k₁₂ not in the subset that contain the first item;

determining a number of item groups $k_{21} = N_1 - k_{11}$ in the subset that do not contain the first item;

determining a number of item groups $k_{22} = N_2 - 1_{-12}$ not in the subset that do not contain the first item;

and determining a log likelihood ratio.

Independent claim 39 recites:

- 39. A system for disc vering relationships among items comprising:
 - a user interface for accepting item selections from a plurality of users;
 - at least one log database, coupled to the user interface, for storing a log for each user, each log containing identifiers for the user's item selections;
 - a query input device for accepting a query including at least one query item identifier;
 and
 - a recommendation engine, coupled to the log database and to the query input device, for scoring the user logs, responsive to a degree of occurrence, to generate user log scores, and for determining at least one result item, responsive to a degree of occurrence in at least a subset of the scored user logs.

Independent claim 59 recites:

59. A computer-readable medium comprising computer readable code for discovering relationships between items, comprising:

computer-readable code adapted to accept item selections from a plurality of users; computer-readable code adapted to generate a log for each user, each log containing identifiers for the user's item selections;

computer-readable code adapted to accept a query including at least one query item identifier;

computer-readable code adapted to score the user logs, responsive to a degree of occurrence of the at least one query item identifier in the user logs, to generate user log scores; and

computer-readable code adapted t determine at least one result item, responsive to a degree of occurrence in at least a subset of the scored user logs.

Independent claim 93 recites:

93. A computer-readable medium comprising computer-readable code for discovering a relationship between a first item and a second item, comprising:

computer-readable code adapted to determine a total number of item groups N;

- computer-readable code adapted to determine a number of item groups N_1 in a subset of item groups, the subset of item groups being defined as including those item groups that contain a second item;
- computer-readable code adapted to determine a number of item groups N₂ not in the subset of item groups;
- computer-readable code adapted to determine a number of item groups k₁₁ in the subset that contain the first item;
- computer-readable code adapted to determine a number of item groups k_{12} not in the subset that contain the first item;
- computer-readable code adapted to determine a number of item groups $\mathbf{k}_{21}=N_1$ \mathbf{k}_{11} in the subset that do not contain the first item
- computer-readable code adapted to determine a number of item groups $k_{22} = N_2 k_{12}$ not in the subset that do not contain the first item; and

computer-readable code adapted to determine a log likelihood ratio.

The present invention provides a recommendation engine and application capable of discovering relationships among items and recommending items without requiring undue effort on the part of the user. The recommendations provided by the present invention are based on user profiles that take into account actual preferences of users, without requiring users to complete questionnaires. The present invention provides improved data analysis by avoiding inaccurate assumptions regarding distribution of user preferences. In particular, the present invention employs a binomial log likelihood ratio to provide improved analysis of data points describing user preferences. The invention thus provides improved recommendation generation, while avoiding the problems of overstatement of coincidences and dominance of bestsellers.

The claims are directed toward several different variations of these recommendation engine techniques. Claim 1 recites a method for discovering relationships by accepting item selections from a plurality of users, generating a log for each user, accepting a query including at 1 ast one query item identifier, scoring the user logs responsive to a degree of occurrence of the at least one query identifier in the user logs, to generate user scores. Claim 34 recites a method claim for discovering a relationship between a first and second item by determining a total number of item groups N, determining a number of item groups N_1 in a subset of item groups, determining a number of item groups N_2 not in the subset of item groups, determining a number of item groups k_{11} in the subset that contain the first item, determining a number of item groups k_{12} not in the subset that contain the first item, determining a number of item groups $k_{21} = N_1 - k_{11}$, determining a number of item groups $k_{22} = N_2 - k_{12}$, and determining a log likelihood ratio. Claim 39 recites a system for discovering relationships using a user interface for accepting item selections from a plurality of users, at least one log database, a query input device for accepting a query including at least one query item identifier, and a recommendation engine for scoring the

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user logs. Claim 59 recites a computer pr gram product corresponding to the method of claim 1. Claim 93 recites a computer program product corresponding to the method of claim 34.

U.S. Patent No. 6,065,058 to Hailpern et al., "Dynamic Push Filtering Based on Information Exchanged Among Nodes in A Proxy Heirarchy"

Hailpern et al. is understood to disclose a method and sy tem for filtering push information in a client-server hierarchy based on actual usage information. A pushed object is communicated down the hierarchy by communicating usage information up the hierarchy and filtering the pushed object based on the communicated usage information. Usage information can include actual object reference/access patterns.

However, Hailpern et al. does not teach the invention of claims 1, 34, 39, 59, or 93 and in particular does not teach any technique for accepting a query. Rather, Hailpern et al. uses filtering to push an object to a user, and in fact solves a completely different problem than that addressed by the present invention. Hailpern et al. seeks to reduce network traffic caused by increased popularity of the world wide web. Specifically, Hailporn et al. teaches a push based filtering approach intended to avoid delays caused by increased :raffic when a user requests a document. Hailpern et al. pushes objects through a client-server hierarchy without a request by the user. Thus, Hailpern et al. fails to disclose any technique for accepting a query as claimed herein, and in fact teaches away from accepting a query since push technology generally involve

Furthermore, with respect to claims 34 and 93, Hailpern et al. does not teach any technique for using a log likelihood ratio. Rather, Hailpern et ai. merely discloses the use of a usage label to convey preference information. The preference it formation in the usage label consists of a usage category and a preference category. The usage category is a simple count of the number of times an object is referenced by a user. The preference category conveys user-

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identified preferences. In neither case does Hailpern et al. use a log likelihood ratio as recited in claims 34 and 93.

U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2002/0013852 Al 1-) Janik, "System for providing Content Management, and Interactivity For Thin Client Devices."

Janik is understood to disclose a system for delivering content, data, and application services to a variety of thin client devices. The system is used to provide a means for end users to program preference-based content for delivery at various client services, and then to automatically or under the control of the user, send the content to client devices for presentation to the end user.

However, Janik does not teach the invention of claims 1 34, 39, 59, or 93 and in particular does not teach any technique for scoring user logs, responsive to a degree of occurrence of at least one query item identifier in user logs. Rather, Janik provides the user with the ability to group audio files into user defined playlists. Since the playlist is user defined, it teaches away from a relationship discovery engine claimed in the present invention. In particular, in the system disclosed in Janik, the user identifies content to be delivered. Janik does not disclose scoring user logs, responsive to a degree of occurrence of at least one query item identifier in user logs as claimed herein. Furthermore, Janik fails to disclose a technique for determining at least one result item as claimed herein. Janik morely permits the user to group audio files and consequently has no need to score user logs to discover relationships or to determine a result item. In contrast, the present invention recommendation engine makes a recommendation by determining at least one result item responsive to a degree of occurrence in at least a subset of the scored user logs.

Furthermore, with respect to claims 34 and 93, Janik does not teach any technique for using a log likeliho d ratio. Janik does not teach any sort of scoring or use of a log likelihood ratio since the playlists in Janik are user defined.

U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2001/0044855 Al to Vermeire et al., "System for Accessing Content"

Vermeire et al. is understood to disclose a system for accessing content from the Internet and other computer networks using a database, a content provider interface, and a viewer interface. The database maps channel codes to network addresses as well as to content descriptions. The content provider assists content providers in antering network addresses and content descriptions for their information and entertainment content into the database. The viewer guide displays the content descriptions and a network browser allows a user to view the content of a channel. Additionally, the network browser creates a Favorite Channel system including a submenu for each genre and assigns each channel the user designates as a favorite to that genre submenu.

However, Vermeire et al. does not teach the invention of claims 1, 34, 39, 59, or 93 and in particular does not teach any technique for scoring user logs, esponsive to a degree of occurrence of at least one item identifier in the user logs. Even shough Vermeire et al. teaches the use of a Favorite Channel system, the channels in the Favorite Channel system are assigned by the user. The user must identify a favorite channel for the browser to include in the Favorite Channel system. Since such channels are user identified, Verme ire system teaches away from a relationship discovery engine as claimed herein. The present invention recommendation engine scores user logs, responsive to a degree of occurrence of at least one item identifier in the user logs. Thus, the present invention implements a scoring process without requiring the user to assign a score or a favorite.

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Furthermore, Vermeire et al. fails to disclose any technique for determining at least one result item. Vermeire et al. discloses merely having a user identify a favorite. In contrast, the present invention recommendation engine determines at least one result item and is therefore not reliant on a user identifying favorites.

Furthermore, with respect to claims 34 and 93, Vermeire et al. does not teach any technique for using a log likelihood ratio. Vermeire et al. does not teach any sort of scoring or use of a log likelihood ratio since the system in Vermeire et al. i : user defined.

U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2001/0042107 A1 to Palm, "Networked Audio Player Transport Protocol and Architecture"

Palm is understood to disclose a system for communications using a networked multimedia device and a media server. A user may navigate and select a particular media item to be played. The user, also, can indicate user preferences such as a hierarchical list, searches and content provider suggestions.

However, Palm does not teach the invention of claims 1, 34, 39, 59, or 93 and in particular does not disclose any technique for scoring user logs. In Palm's system a user may indicate preferences, but there is no scoring user logs. Palm me ely permits a user to identify and select a playlist. Palm does not disclose any technique for scoring user logs because the system in Palm is user defined.

Furthermore, Palm fails to disclose a technique for determining at least one result item, responsive to a degree of occurrence in at least one subset of the scored user logs. The system discl sed in Palm permits an interactive search for specific title: using key words. It will be appreciated that an interactive search is not determining a result item responsive to a degree of occurrence in at least a subset of user logs. Additionally, Palm discloses permitting a user to select and identify a song or playlist. Each selection in the Palm system is a selection made by

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the user. Thus, the system disclosed in Palm teaches away from the present invention because in the Palm system selections are user defined. In particular, there is no teaching in Palm of scoring user logs or determining result items based on the scored logs as claimed herein.

Furthermore, with respect to claims 34 and 93, Palm does not teach any technique for using a log likelihood ratio. Palm does not teach any sort of scoring or use of a log likelihood ratio since the system in Palm is user defined.

Other Claims

Since the cited references do not disclose the claimed features discussed above, claims 1, 34, 39, 59, and 93 are patentably distinguishable over the references. The remaining claims in the present application each incorporate the limitations of claim. 1, 34, 39, 59, or 93, and include additional features and limitations. Therefore, all claims herein are patentably distinguishable over the cited references for at least the reasons discussed above

Consideration of the cited references and other information and grant of special status by this petition is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Ted E. Dunning and Bradley D. Kindig

Dated: October 23, 2002

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DATE: October 23, 2002

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FROM: Amir H. Raubvogel, Esq.

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Filing Date:

April 30, 2001

Title:

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Examiner:

Yahdeja Retta

Group Art Unit:

2165

Atty. Dkt. No.:

kt. No.: 22227-04647

Pursuant to your instructions, attached is a Supplemental Petition to Make Special including a Transmittal form and Fee Transmittal form. Please expedite processing of this petition. If you need anything further, please call me at (650) §58-7276.

Sincerely, Amir H. Raubvogel

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